

concentrated by far the greater part of the land values created by the whole community.

In very many countries, attempts have been made to collect for the State some part of unearned increment, but, as far as can be ascertained, satisfactory results have never been achieved by any system of levy other than an annual tax or rate on land values.

A uniform tax on land values equal to its rental value unimproved, i.e., its "economic rent" would eliminate speculation altogether, and the revenue received by the State would enable taxation on industry and on earned incomes to be very greatly reduced. If industrialists and wage earners realised this, the reform would be effected very quickly indeed.

It is essential for the community to re-think its attitude towards public expenditure on developmental works, and to decide whether it can afford to subsidise such works largely for the benefit of the limited section of the community which receives practically the whole benefit in unearned increment.

Unearned fortunes are made only at the expense of the community. Is the post-war programme to follow the pre-war practice which might well be labelled "Public Expenditure for Private Profit," or are we going to do some straight thinking on this question of the "Land Problem"?

### Engineers and Economic Laws

Underlying and governing the economic life of the community there are simple unvarying natural laws which cannot be flouted or ignored. The often referred to "Poverty in the Midst of Progress" is simply the consequence of our refusal to recognise these natural laws, and plan our economic and social life accordingly.

"In Nature," someone has rightly said, "there are no rewards and no punishments; there are only consequences." Engineers do not question the fairness or unfairness of the law of gravitation or of the laws that govern electrical phenomena. They do not ignore these laws nor attempt to deny their existence. They endeavour to understand them, and design their structures and their machines to take advantage of what they know will be inevitable. If this were our attitude to economic problems, there would soon be little unemployment and no undeserved poverty; there would be amazingly rapid material progress in all industries throughout the community but there would be no great accumulations of wealth by individuals who had not earned it by service to the community.

A British engineering journal recently drew attention to the fact that increasing numbers of people, who vaguely profess liberty, believe it to be no longer possible, and, to obtain freedom from want, are prepared to accept throughout their lives the regimentation and bureaucracy of socialism. I do not hold that view, nor do I believe that the surrender of liberty to the State is necessary or desirable. The world provides all the resources necessary to satisfy the material desires of all men, and that our failure to take advantage of these resources to the limit of human ingenuity—our failure to distribute equitably even the benefits of our present restricted and handicapped industrial and community effort, and our failure to solve the so-called problem of under-consumption is due to our failure to recognise the "Land Question" as fundamental. We have gone wrong on the Land Question, and everything else has gone wrong automatically.

There is no greater or more urgent task of leadership for the engineer than to help the Community to a clear understanding of the simple economic laws that govern the distribution or benefits from human activities.

**A Free Copy of "Land & Liberty" is an invitation to become a subscriber. 3d. Monthly. By post, 4s. Yearly; U.S.A. and Canada, \$1.**

## LIBERAL LIBERTY LEAGUE

THE ANNUAL General Meeting of the members of the League will be held in the Livingstone Hall, Broadway, Westminster (nearly opposite St. James's Park Station), on Thursday February 28, at 5.15 p.m. It will be followed at 7.15 p.m. by a Public Meeting at which the Chairman of the League, Mr. Ashley Mitchell, will preside, the speakers being Messrs. Wilfrid Harrison, T. Atholl Robertson and A. W. Madsen.

In the posters and other advertising, the subject of the meeting is announced as follows:

CAN WE SOLVE THE HOUSE FAMINE  
THE SHORTAGE OF GOODS AND FOOD  
AND CREATE PROSPERITY  
BY LIBERTY AND  
PRIVATE ENTERPRISE?  
YES!

Members are particularly requested not only to attend the Business Meeting, where important decisions will be taken, but also to help to ensure the success of the Public Meeting, especially by displaying the posters and distributing the (free) tickets by which, in addition to Press announcements, it will be advertised. Please also provide names of interested persons, with their addresses, to whom invitations may be sent.

In a reference to the League's Tunbridge Wells meeting on January 26, *Motor Transport* of February 9 said: "Support for the haulage industry in its campaign against the Government's proposals was urged at a meeting convened by the Liberal Party League. The subject was 'A Call to Freedom—Planned Men or Free.' Mr. George Winder, a farmer, said it was intolerable that thousands of small private owners should be robbed of an interest in and reward for their industry and their freedom to earn their own living in the way they wanted. Mr. Stephen Martin said that nationalisation, simply put, meant State monopoly, and whereas the people had power to compel their Government to take action against monopoly, they were powerless against a Government which was the monopolist."

Lady Rhys-Williams has resigned the chairmanship of the Publications and Publicity Committee of the Liberal Party Organisation as a protest against the leadership of the Party in the House of Commons. In her letter to the Chairman of the Executive, published in the *Manchester Guardian*, February 13, she took exception to the speeches of the present leaders which could not be reconciled with Liberal principles and in particular she found it impossible to defend the statement by Mr. T. L. Horabin, the Chief Whip, in the debate on the Land Acquisition Bill that he favoured the nationalisation of the land, which he must know had never been accepted as Liberal party policy. Lady Rhys-Williams, the *Manchester Guardian* remarks, was signatory of the report on coal published by Mr. Seebohm Rowntree's Liberal Committee which favoured a reconstructed coal commission as the best means to revive the coal industry. The Liberal M.P.s on the other hand voted for the second reading of Mr. Shinwell's bill to nationalise the mines. These are the divided counsels which have brought the party to its present pass, its leadership false to the principles of Liberalism. And, at last, within the hierarchy itself, comes this sign of revolt.

The League calls for adequate financial support for the extension of its campaign, contributions being sent to the Hon. Treasurer at 4, Great Smith Street, London, S.W.1. It invites new members, the minimum membership subscription being 5s. yearly with addition of whatever extra donation the subscriber may be disposed to give. From a number of members the renewal of subscription for 1946 is now due and the Hon. Treasurer cordially reminds them of the financial needs of the League when they are making remittance.

**2d. HOW THE ENGLISH PEOPLE BECAME LANDLESS. And How to Regain the Land.**

**3d. Each. LECTURES AND ADDRESSES BY HENRY GEORGE: The Crime of Poverty; Moses; Scotland and Scotsmen; Thou Shalt Not Steal; Thy Kingdom Come; Justice the Object, Taxation the Means; The Land for the People.**

**3d. THE LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL AND SITE VALUE RATING. Debates on the Bill and Discussion in the Press.**

**3d. UNEMPLOYMENT AND THE LAND. By W. R. Lester, M.A.**

**3d. THE NEW POLITICAL ECONOMY. By John B. Sharpe.**